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Hygiene

Unless subject to taboos, both sexes bathe at least once a day, the younger people twice or three times. If all the residents are assembled during the vų'tę' period, the younger generation take their first bath jointly before sunrise as soon as the youths' and maidens' dance in the plaza abruptly comes to a stop. At that moment all dash toward the brook, including the girls, who have quickly fetched their gourd bottles. Men and women of mature age are also in the habit of joining, but those really old rarely come, if at all. The girls go directly upstream, take up a position counter to the current, and fill their vessels, everyone laughing and splashing about. At this early hour the air is piercing cold on the steppe, and precisely before sunrise a gust of wind is likely to make the bathers shiver as they get out of their bath. In order to get warm everybody rushes up the slope toward the village. But the members of whatever festive organizations happen to be functioning assemble halfway to the settlement around fires, for which they have already brought along dry palm grass. Only after having warmed themselves they run shouting, each society separately, into the village, where each occupies its appropriate site in the plaza.

During the day they generally bathe again, performing their ablutions by rubbing themselves with their hands or with leaves. After nightfall they avoid entering the water. The hair, as noted, is washed by rubbing it between the palms. Notwithstanding their efforts the skin rarely appears wholly clean, for it usually retains remnants of old body paint, feathers glued on, and the like—the sort of things regarded as dirt by civilized people. Babies at the breast are the cleanest part of the population, for they are washed without delay as soon as they are dirty.

The oral cavity is cleansed with the index and middle fingers and rinsed with sand. They never clean their fingernails.

When at most three years old the Rąmkõ'kamekra boys and girls know how to swim and dive. I observed that the Krahõ', Kre'pų'mkateye, and the Timbira of Araparytíua were all good swimmers, and the same has been reported of the Põrekamekra.[36] On the other hand, I had a different impression of the Krĩkati, who do not live along running watercourses and of whom I suspect at least some are unable to swim. At all events they manifested a striking repugnance to deep water, as I noted repeatedly when they accompanied me from their village to Porto Franco on the Tocantins. At the Ribeirão da Aldea, whose wooded bank was somewhat more than knee-deep under water, while in midstream the water of the brook did not extend beyond my saddle, these Indians cut off sticks to take soundings ahead of them, and I had long reached the opposite bank when I still heard them splashing behind me and excitedly shouting at one another. They talked of the Ribeirão dos Arraias, which is 20 m. wide and 1½ deep, as though it were an insurmountable obstacle; and the successful crossing took an eternity, for each of the women had to be led across by two men. Still more amusing was the passage of the shallow, but swift streamlet known as Lageado in a canoe belonging to a Neobrazilian. At first no one ventured to step into it, and when the first hero hesitantly and diffidently succumbed to my mockery, his wife kept singing in a booming voice on the bank till she saw him safely on land.

The dwellings are in general tolerably cleanly. Every self-respecting woman will sweep her house and the space before it at least once a day—even several times if the offals after a meal require it. The brooms are made of the inflorescence of the assahy (*Euterpe* sp.) or the bacaba palm (*Oenocarpus* sp.), or a bundle of mallow

[36] Pohl, Reise, 2:200 f.

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224 In the good old days conditions were quite different. Naturally there was occasional hunger when the hunters' luck failed them,[29] but game formed the chief food supply, vegetable dishes being ancillary. If a single hunter failed, a party would encircle a bit of the steppe with fire, leaving a gap for the hunters, who would club or shoot the fugitive beasts so far as they had not yet been overcome by the smoke and heat. Nowadays both the ubiquitous livestock of the Neobrazilians and the smallness of the remaining area bar this technique.

262 136 Normally all mammals rank as edible. The steppes and *galeria* forests of the Rąmkõ'kamekra still harbor the following: four species of deer (*Mazama* sp.); the fox (*Canis brasiliensis*); agouti (*Dasyprocta aguti*); paca (*Coelogenys paca*); cavy = pereá (*Cavia* sp.); two species of wild pig (*Dicotyles labiatus, D. torquatus*); two species of anteater (*Myrmecophaga jubata, M. tetradactyla*); four species of armadillo (*Dasypus* sp.); two species of opossum (*Didelphys* sp.); the porcupine (*Coerolabes* sp.); the skunk (*Memphitis suffocans*); steppe rats (*Muridae* ?); bats (*Chiropterus* sp.); very rarely, the coati (*Nasua* sp.); monkeys (*Cebus apella*); small hares (*Sylvilagus brasiliensis*); wildcats (*Felis pardalis*); and pumas (*Felis concolor*). Though the number of these species is fairly considerable, not one of them is at all abundant enough for dependence on it as a constant source of food.

All birds are eaten except the carrion vultures (*Catharistes urubú*, Vieill.; *Carthartes aura*, Linn.); the king vulture (*Gypagus papa*, Linn.); certain *Cuculidae* (*Piaiya* sp., *Crotophaga* sp.), and species beyond consideration because of their tiny bodies, such as the *Trochilidae* and many *Pipridae*.

Most important of the birds eaten is the pampa ostrich (*Rhea macrorhyncha*, Selater). There follow the sariema (*Cariama cristata*, Linn.); such fowls as the jacú (*Penelope* sp.); the aracuã (*Ortalis guttata*, Spix), which is relatively abundant in old plantations; various inambú species (*Tinamus* sp., *Crypturus* sp.); partridges (*Rhynchotus rufescens*, Temm.); wild pigeons (*Columba* sp.; *Leptoptila* sp.); and parrots. Red araras are virtually unattainable here at present, so [237] that the chief material for feathered decoration is lacking, for want of which the Indians in part substitute kerchiefs. Again and again they implored me to bring them arara feathers from the Apinayé, who in this respect are somewhat better off. Aquatic birds are wholly lacking, except for a species of heron (*Tigrisoma* sp.) [857] and a waterfowl (*Aramides* sp.). Small birds are hunted only by boys, who use arrows with a knobbed tip or with a cross of little rods (pl. 16, *c*, *d*).

The Timbira do not eat tailless amphibians and look with contempt upon the Guajajára for eating at least three species. On the other hand, they neither avoid large lizards (*Iguana* sp.; *Tupinambis* sp.) nor crocodiles and nonvenomous snakes. The Rąmkõ'kamekra offered me the flesh of the sucurijú (*Eunectes murinus*), the giboya (Boa constrictor), and the caninana (*Phrynonax sulphureus*). Land tortoises (*Testudo tabulata*) and a small water tortoise (*Emys* sp.?), which is taken with hook and line, are highly prized.

Women, as noted, eat head lice, though these naturally do not rank as food or as a delicacy. The Indians said they did not know themselves why they ate them, seeing that they are tasteless. Possibly it is "by way of punishment"; that was the reason given me among the Kaingang, whom I would see picking ticks off their bodies, crushing them with their teeth, and then expectorating them. Occasionally the Canella also consume the fat, white beetle larvae found in the kernels of palm nuts—when they do not prefer using them as a hair cosmetic. However, they do

[29] Pohl, Reise, 2:260.

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552 a new copper roasting pan in place of one that was no longer usable, they regarded it as my daughter, so to speak, and accordingly my sister, Kra'napą'n, transferred her name to it.

551 Nicknames, except for those bestowed by Neobrazilians and then sometimes used by the natives themselves, are rare and borne mostly by young lads and girls. Thus, one youth was called Pičanre, from Portuguese *pixano* (used to call tomcats) plus the diminutive ending; and the fat little wanton Muruwá was dubbed Tokĩ, from Portuguese *toquinho*, a small tree stump.

[177] All adult Rąmkõ'kamekra have been baptized by Catholic priests, some possibly more than once. They use exclusively these baptismal names in their intercourse with Neobrazilians, but very rarely among themselves—the women never, a considerable number of them having forgotten their Christian names.

No Timbirá manifests any reluctance about uttering his name. Refusal to answer Neobrazilian queries on this point is due simply to the feeling that it is none of the interrogator's business or that he could not pronounce the name anyway.

ORPHANS; TREATMENT OF CHILDREN

736 855 If the mother dies, her child remains with her kinswomen, with whom it has been living since birth, though in contravention of the matrilocal principle a girl is occasionally brought up by her father's sister. The father's death does not materially affect the child's social status either, for the orphans' relatives treat them with as much amiability and benevolence as if they were their own offspring. Thanks to their matrilocal institutions the Rąmkõ'kamekra have no "poor, unfortunate orphans": a stepfather has no power to abuse them in a house that is not his, but theirs; and an "evil stepmother" simply has no close contacts with them.

All the Timbira treat their children with great patience and gentleness, never yelling at them, nor, so far as I have observed, ever beating them. Stubborn little children or those who bawl from sheer caprice—a thing of rare occurrence—are simply ignored by their parents and very soon stop.

PLAY

524 532 Little girls have relatively many toys. Their dolls are approximately cylindrical pieces of burity leafstalk, rarely of wood; they are of the length of a finger or span. They lack heads, face, and limbs, though female dolls are provided with wax breasts, a corded girdle, and sometimes corded sashes. The male dolls generally lack all decoration, being only rarely equipped with a forehead band and grass girdle. Both sexes are painted black and red or have falcon down glued on them. (See pl. 23, *i–k*.)

415 524 Practically all the domestic utensils of adults may serve as patterns for toys; one sees tiny gourd bowls and bottles, fire fans, baskets of all sorts, provender pouches, little sleeping mats and hammocks, manioc presses and strainers, carrying baskets, etc. Coiled basketry, which these Indians had completely abandoned as too complicated for practical use, was found exclusively as the technique for toy baskets at the time of my first visit. At my suggestion it was revived for utensils. (See pls. 23, *h, l, m*; 24, *d–f, h, k, l*.)

[123] 857 In the bushes back of the dwellings little girls assemble in twos or threes to set up a dolls' household sheltered by little huts made of twigs and mats. Then they beg their mothers to glue falcon down on a doll couple so as to be able to get them married by laying the dolls together on a miniature sleeping mat.

Toys are the property of the child; to obtain them I had to get the child's consent.

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When about four to eight years old the girls wear as festive decoration wooden bracelets, which are sometimes prettily carved.

Boys segregate themselves from girls at an early age. Their first and principal toy is a small bow, which differs from the adults' weapon in having a round cross section (pl. 24, *a*). The first arrows are little rods made from the ribs of palm leaflets (pl. 24, *b*). As the lads grow older, bows and arrows gradually approach the ultimate form, the stave grows flatter, the arrows are feathered and pointed.

Among playthings there are toy guns for shooting maize kernels by means of an elastic strip of bamboo (pl. 23, *g*). Obviously borrowed from Neobrazilians, they share the name of firearms, katõkre (tõk, the report of a gun). Further, the boys have buzzers (pl. 24, *n*), humming tops with a string pulled through the hole in a little board (pl. 24, *i*), small palm-nut tops, miniature imitations of dance masks, animal figurines of wax (pl. 23, *a–f*), and grass figures like those of the Apinayé.[=]

Trick carvings (pl. 24, *o*), games of patience (pl. 24, *m*), and cat's cradle serve for the amusement of bigger boys and girls.

THE BOYS' CLASS

At about six years of age the boys begin to have a sense of age-class solidarity, a fact that strongly affects their relations with their families. No one urges them to form such a company, which is joined quite spontaneously, by some of them earlier, by others later. This is a natural consequence of an environment surcharged with a socioceremonial spirit. As their model they take the youngest of the four official age classes, and whenever this group plays its part in a major ceremonial this has an obviously stimulating effect on the minors.

I first observed this in 1930 at the second ketúaye of the subsequent põhĩtĩkama class. About fifteen boys (from among twice that number), mostly six to eight years old united as an unofficial class. *On their own request* the council appointed an instructor, mekapónkate, for them; and he taught them to plait, shoot, sing and dance, explained the ceremonial, and enjoined upon them to be honest and comradely. They went jointly to bathe and hunt, arranged races and log races—in short, prepared in every respect for their future status as a recognized class. The elders even gave them a class name—Pądntųktĩkama (pądntųkti, black arara). Three years later the põhĩtĩkama completed their cycle of initiation and precipitated a shift of age classes in the plaza; and the minors were then admitted as the junior eastern class, mepantúa, to the northeast station there, acquiring the name Kra'tãkama. As already stated, they began racing against the western mepantúa, a group on the average ten years older. In the following year, when subjected to their first ketúaye, they had their organization completed.

On my return in 1935 I found a new boys' class in process of formation. In 1936 I saw them nicely imitating the adults' erection of a hadre mast at the opening of the vų'tę' period. A group of hunters comprising members of both age-class moieties had prepared a mast 6 m. high outside the village. Having wound foliage round it and tied on the sliced game, they carried it into the village at a trot. Ahead of them a man came dashing and uttering piercing yells; in the center of the plaza he dug a hole for the post. At once the women came rushing up from all directions. The hunters planted the pole in the pit and held it erect, but pretended to let it drop now in one direction, now in the other, which naturally made the women run thither. At last the men laid down the mast, and the women stripped it pell-mell while one of the Clowns at the last moment tried to drag it away. Hardly was this

[=] Nimuendajú, The Apinayé, 108 f.